DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 243 514 JC 840 187

AUTHOR Eaton, Judith S.
TITLE Building Tomorrow.
PUB DATE 10 Oct 83
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the National Conference of the League for Innovation in the Community College (Newport Beach, CA, October 10-12, 1983).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; *College Planning; *Community Colleges; *Educational Change; *Educational Trends; *Futures (of Society); Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

A hypothetical account of the demise of the community college in the United States by the year 2000 is provided in this paper, along with suggestions for ways community colleges can avoid this fate. First, the reasons for the demise are presented, including the rise of vocational institutes, which took over the vocational education function of community colleges; major cutbacks in funding and the inability of the colleges to compete for funds; the inability of the colleges to adapt to emerging technologies; and the rise in the proportion of jobs not requiring higher education. Next, the strategies undertaken by some comprehensive community colleges to preserve their existence are highlighted, including a re-emphasis on the humanities, a focus on excellence and new and emerging technologies, an acknowledgement of financial limitations, and adaptation to employment changes. Finally, suggestions are provided for ways community colleges can avoid a premature demise, including: (1) rethinking what learning is, equating it less with memorization and more with thinking; (2) emphasizing sharing among institutions and developing a less parochial attitude toward campuses and equipment; and (3) implementing a new style and context for humanities education, looking to ways it can provide the most effective services to students. (HB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED243514

"Building Tomorrow"

by

Judith S. Eaton

Presented to the League for Innovation
Newport Beach, California

October 10, 1983

JC 840 187

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. A. Cook

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

It's the year 2000--and there are no community colleges. No--talk of mission, debates about access, funding worries, and battles over control. One thousand two hundred thirty-one presidents are out of jobs! So are 250,000 faculty, 15,000 administrators. (AACJC Directory, 1982). And 7,000,000 students are no longer involved in community college education.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Well--there were community colleges until 1985. But then things changed. As the country began adjusting to "sunrise" industries, as the economy became increasingly international, as "recession" (versus growth) became a prevailing framework of economic activity, as "lifelong learning" ran its course, as the number of 18 to 24 year olds dropped, as concerns about quality remained unsolved, as a movement and its attendant feelings became increasingly institutionalized, bureaucratic, and increasingly static; community colleges no longer had a sense of purpose and a sense of place.

WHAT HAPPENED?

- New and emerging technologies recreated Vocational Institutes to train for a limited number of jobs.
- Concern for literacy, academic standards and excellence closed the open door--not intentionally--but selective admission instead of augmenting access replaced access and new "Literary Institutes" replaced a number of comprehensive community colleges.
- A stagnant economy destroyed a national incentive toward public policy education--and community service programs were displaced.
- A service economy produced many new jobs--most of which were not "high technology" and which did not require two years of technical training.

Students who had attended community colleges now spent time in these Vocational Institutes or Literary Institutes or they attended four-year colleges or universities. These last had learned well from the early successes of community colleges and had developed flexible career options for part-time students, encouraged access through moderating of admission requirements, and developed effective partnerships with business and industry.

As we all know, community colleges did very well in the 1960's and 1970's--a tenfold increase in students in a decade--a 10 billion dollar enterprise by the 1980's. Comprehensiveness, access, lifelong learning, "Democracy's College" set a new pace and direction for higher education.

When, in the late 1970's and early 1980's, many states were affected by budget cuts and opted for more (rather than less) state control following California's Proposition 13 model, community colleges did not know how to respond. They lacked the constituencies they needed in state capitals and even in their local communities. Their capacity to compete for funds and control was hampered by their having served the under-educated, the poor, women, and minorities--hardly the characteristics of the power elite. Faced with mounting public concern regarding their effectiveness as well as public awareness of a changing economy, community colleges fell back on their vocational origins and sought to forge a new identity through public-private sector partnerships, "high" technology and the Job Training Partnership Act.

IT DIDN'T WORK.

Money was not forthcoming from the private sector--they trained better, faster and more satisfactorily by maintaining their own $30-60 billion dollar industry (1982). Training was a growth industry for the private sector. Federal funds were highly political and competitive.

The next community college effort centered on the "Excellence" bandwagon. But that, too, backfired. In the minds of many, the community college contribution to enriched academic standards should be an expansion of their functioning as remedial centers--not as bonafide higher education institutions.

Finally, some comprehensive community colleges tried to preserve themselves through a re-emphasis on the humanities. Concentration on the humanities appeared to respond to most of the demands made by the environment of the 1980's:

Excellence: discussion of improved academic standards seemed to go hand in hand with humanities education. Rightly or wrongly, the notion of quality was still embedded in commitments to academic (versus vocational) programming. The various studies calling for improved and enriched education invariably cited the liberal arts and sciences as critical to enhancement of the educational process. Training was important--but the heart and soul of the academic process still lay in traditional disciplines.

New and emerging technologies: The private sector message was clear: train all you want, but effective employees are educated employees--they possess life/survival skills: cognitive and affective abilities. They have (in the language of Cohen and Brawer) been "educated for." Training in new technologies will not be successful unless:

- a general skills foundation has been laid for mastering work and life environments.
- a firm, theoretical foundation has been laid for mastering the technical (math and science).

And it is still the case that this education is provided primarily through the liberal arts and sciences.

Financial limitations: a society that perceives the need for quality education will pay for it. Humanities education was not expensive education. Humanities education was traditional and safe.

Jobs not requiring training: hopefully living is more than working. While specific training may no longer be necessary for many jobs in the "new economy," effective functioning in the society increasingly required education--to learn for change, for awareness, and for effective involvement. Of 4.63 million jobs created by 1990, almost 3.0 million did not require higher education. Of the 800,000 jobs abolished by 1990, more than 500,000 traditionally required higher education. (Ehrbar, 1983)

The benefits of high technology training were more in doubt in the early 1980's. Computer assemblers in 1982 earned about 70% of the hourly wage of auto workers. In 1981, 52,000 people were competing for 24,000 entry-level jobs in computer programming. Between 1960 and 1980, college enrollments increased 219% while employment in high-level occupations increased by 79%. Only 28% of new jobs in the 1980's were professional and managerial (compared with 36% in 1960 and 45% in 1970). There were big gains, however, janitors, nurses aids, sales clerks, and cashiers. (Chronicle, 6/15/83).

In all seriousness, the humanities are not and will not be the "white knight" of the community college movement. The humanities are not our sole salvation. They are, however, critical to our consideration of the most major issues and challenges which face community colleges and the future:

(1) How do we conceptualize tomorrow: how do we build a tomorrow greatly affected by electronics? How will our institutions be organized? What will our delivery systems be? What kind of facilities will we have or not have?

(2) How do we create and enhance an intellectual tradition for community colleges? We need to begin to define ourselves not only in terms of what other institutions are not, but also in terms of the special nature of our services.

We have not yet identified educational objectives associated with accommodating computer technology. We are unsure of the kind of "worker" the information service society really needs. We are not sure of how our institutions should be structured and how we should relate to our constituencies.

We need: new visions for tomorrow's technology and tomorrow's learnings. We need a college culture which provides help to get to the future--to create "tomorrow's people." We need to avoid "trained incapability." We need the humanities.

Dr. Steven Muller, President of John Hopkins University (closing plenary session address of the 1983 AAHE Convention) spoke to the radical differences we can expect among our universities of the future. These are differences in clientele, delivery, what we offer, and how we operate.

Community college literature has been speaking to those changes for years. But bear with President Muller--and me--for it is his description of these differences which provides some insight.

Clientele: adults who want to participate in education for a variety of reasons: professional retooling or shifting to a new career, education as entertainment in an era in which labor is no longer exhausting and leisure has become democratized.

Delivery Systems: satellites, cable fiberoptics, dishes, computers, interactive technology, microwave. We are becoming a space independent culture. We will likely become language independent through instantaneous transaction by computer. People will be served where they live or work.

What We Offer: We will have to rethink what learning is and equate it less with memorization and reading and more with thinking in the sense "...of educating people to the point where they know what kind of data they want to be able to use...why they want that data and have the mental capacity to deal with that data..." "...memory is going to be less important than what you want to remember and what you want to do with what you remember, and how you convert data." "State of The Art" training will be replaced by a "good fundamental education"--training people to be lifelong learners-because they will need it.

How We Operate: We will become more serious about sharing--less parochial about campuses and equipment. We may even share globally.

We all are well aware that traditional educational institutions no longer have a monopoly on higher education. Indeed, community colleges which were once considered non-traditional, are, in the context of futurist thinking, "traditional." "Connection" "communications," and "cooperation" keynote the challenge of building the future.

- We will no longer be "stand-alone." We will communicate, cooperate and connect primarily through electronics.
- We will share information, facilities and staff.
- We will have even more flexible programs--our trend toward variable time frames, contact without credit, and part-time students will continue.
- We will reorganize the curriculum to encourage thinking as opposed to remembering, interconnectedness (a systems approach) as compared to a discipline orientation. We will emphasize problem solving.
- We will emphasize results--quality measured by exit competencies versus the "input," number of full-time faculty, student-faculty

ratio, admission requirements, number of books in a library. It is an act of faith, after all, to infer that if all desirable variables are present at the beginning of a process, results are guaranteed.

- We will take better care of faculty. We will help them to not only keep up in their fields but also to keep up with the technology of teaching. New model: professor as the manager of a mini-educational system which provides staff support, hardware, and courseware.

The fundamental points here are:

(1) Humanities education is essential to "creating tomorrow." Those who view tomorrow in terms of only additional concentration on technical training are missing at least part of the point. It will not be enough.

(2) Humanities education, like all education, must change its context and style. Humanities education needs to look at ways it can be offered to provide the most effective services to students.

(3) Humanities education must cease to be the primary agency on which we rely upon to convey standards of quality. "Technical education," has a similar obligation.

So--let me start again--It's the year 2000--and there are lots and lots of community colleges.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Electronic impulses have replaced paper, distance, human contact, and the need for the human brain to store information.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Faculty have reversed the 60's, 70's, and 80's trend toward student irresponsibility. They have begun to once again emphasize values and personal

behavior. As Sharon Coady put it "...we refuse to tolerate procrastination, self-indulgence, laziness, or lack of any sense of priorities." (Coady, 1983)

Management has avoided "sellout" to vocationalism and separate training centers. They have worked with boards to provide leadership that ensures institutional integrity in the face of state control and regulatory agencies. They have argued effectively for quality while preserving access. They have been creative in providing leadership which creates that intellectual tradition, creates a college culture, and creates tomorrow's people.

Our roots are in the humanities--however "vocational" we are. They are the sources of the earliest vocationalism, our intellectual tradition, and the values whereby we function meaningfully and with dignity.

Bibliography

American Association of Community and Junior Colleges Directory, 1982.

Dunn, Samuel L: "The Changing University: Survival in the Information Society," The Futurist, August, 1983, pp. 55-60.

Ehrbar, A.F.: "Grasping the New Unemployment," Fortune, May 16, 1983, Vol. 107, #10, pp. 107-112.

"Job Market for College Graduates called "Bleak" for Rest of 1980's," Jack Magarrell, Chronicle of Higher Education, June 15, 1983, Vol. XXVI, No. 16, pp. 1-12.

Muller, Stephen, "The Post-Gutenberg University" AAHE, Washington, D.C., April, 1983.

"Student Irresponsibility: We Helped To Cause It," Sharon Coady, Chronicle of Higher Education, July 6, 1983, p. 48.

ERIC® CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

JUN 15 1984

8118 Math-Sciences Building
Los Angeles, California 90024